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5 Attorneys for Defendant  
6 EXPERIAN INFORMATION  
SOLUTIONS, INC.  
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11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
12 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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14 ASHNA PAUL AND ATUL PAUL,  
Plaintiffs,

v.  
15 COLUMBIA DEBT RECOVERY,  
LLC; DBA GENESIS; EQUIFAX  
16 INFORMATION SERVICES, LLC;  
EXPERIAN INFORMATION  
SOLUTIONS, INC.; AND  
TRANSUNION LLC

17 Case No. 2:25-cv-01155-JGB-SK

18 STIPULATED PROTECTIVE  
ORDER

19  
20 Defendants.

21 1. A. PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

22 Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential,  
proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public  
23 disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may  
be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to  
24 enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this  
Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to  
25 discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends  
26  
27 discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends  
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1 only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment  
2 under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth  
3 in Section 12.3 (Filing Protected Material), below, that this Stipulated Protective  
4 Order does not entitle them to file confidential information under seal; Civil Local  
5 Rule 79-5 sets forth the procedures that must be followed and the standards that will  
6 be applied when a party seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.  
7

8           B. GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

9           This action is likely to involve trade secrets and other valuable research,  
10 development, commercial, financial, technical and/or proprietary information as  
11 well as personal income, credit, and other confidential information for which special  
12 protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than  
13 prosecution of this action is warranted. Such confidential and proprietary materials  
14 and information consist of, among other things, confidential business or financial  
15 information, information regarding confidential business practices, or other  
16 confidential research, development, or commercial information (including  
17 information implicating privacy rights of third parties), information otherwise  
18 generally unavailable to the public, or which may be privileged or otherwise  
19 protected from disclosure under state or federal statutes, court rules, case decisions,  
20 or common law. Accordingly, to expedite the flow of information, to facilitate the  
21 prompt resolution of disputes over confidentiality of discovery materials, to  
22 adequately protect information the parties are entitled to keep confidential, to ensure  
23 that the parties are permitted reasonable necessary uses of such material in  
24 preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to address their handling at the end of the  
25 litigation, and serve the ends of justice, a protective order for such information is  
26 justified in this matter. It is the intent of the parties that information will not be  
27 designated as confidential for tactical reasons and that nothing be so designated  
28 without a good faith belief that it has been maintained in a confidential, non-public

1 manner, and there is good cause why it should not be part of the public record of  
2 this case.

3

4 2. **DEFINITIONS**

5 2.1 **Action:** this pending federal law suit.

6 2.2 **Challenging Party:** a Party or Non-Party that challenges the  
7 designation of information or items under this Order.

8 2.3 **“CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items:** information (regardless of  
9 how it is generated, stored, or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for  
10 protection under **Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c)**, and as specified above in  
11 the Good Cause Statement.

12 2.4 **Counsel:** Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as  
13 their support staff).

14 2.5 **Designating Party:** a Party or Non-Party that designates information  
15 or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as  
16 “CONFIDENTIAL.”

17 2.6 **Disclosure or Discovery Material:** all items or information, regardless  
18 of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including,  
19 among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced  
20 or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

21 2.7 **Expert:** a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter  
22 pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as  
23 an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

24 2.8 **House Counsel:** attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action.  
25 House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside  
26 counsel.

27 2.9 **Non-Party:** any natural person, partnership, corporation, association,  
28 or other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

1           2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a  
2 party to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and  
3 have appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm  
4 which has appeared on behalf of that party, including support staff.

5           2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors,  
6 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and their  
7 support staffs).

8           2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or  
9 Discovery Material in this Action.

10          2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation  
11 support services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or  
12 demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium)  
13 and their employees and subcontractors.

14          2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is  
15 designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

16          2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery  
17 Material from a Producing Party.

18

19          3. SCOPE

20          The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only  
21 Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or  
22 extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or  
23 compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or  
24 presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material.

25          Any use of Protected Material at trial shall be governed by the orders of the  
26 trial judge. This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.

27

28          4. DURATION

1 Even after final disposition of this litigation, as defined in Section 13 (FINAL  
2 DISPOSITION), the confidentiality obligations imposed by this Order shall remain  
3 in effect until a Designating Party agrees otherwise in writing or a court order  
4 otherwise directs.

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6 **5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL**

7       **5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection.**

8 Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under  
9 this Order must take care to limit any such designation to specific material that  
10 qualifies under the appropriate standards. The Designating Party must designate for  
11 protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written  
12 communications that qualify so that other portions of the material, documents,  
13 items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept  
14 unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

15       Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations  
16 that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper  
17 purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to impose  
18 unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Designating  
19 Party to sanctions.

20       If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it  
21 designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must  
22 promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

23       **5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations.** Except as otherwise provided in  
24 this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of Section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise  
25 stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection  
26 under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or  
27 produced.

28       Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

1                             (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic  
2 documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial  
3 proceedings), that the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend  
4 “CONFIDENTIAL” (hereinafter “CONFIDENTIAL legend”), to each page that  
5 contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page  
6 qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected  
7 portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

8                             A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for  
9 inspection need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has  
10 indicated which documents it would like copied and produced. During the  
11 inspection and before the designation, all of the material made available for  
12 inspection shall be deemed “CONFIDENTIAL.” After the inspecting Party has  
13 identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must  
14 determine which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this  
15 Order. Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must  
16 affix the “CONFIDENTIAL legend” to each page that contains Protected Material.  
17 If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the  
18 Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making  
19 appropriate markings in the margins).

20                             (b) deposition or trial testimony can be designated by the parties as  
21 “Confidential.” Such designation can be made on the record, but the parties can  
22 designate portions of such testimony as “Confidential” by providing written notice  
23 of such designation to the opposing party(ies) within thirty (30) days of receipt of  
24 the transcribed testimony by the designating counsel. Until thirty (30) days after  
25 receipt of the transcribed testimony, such testimony shall be treated by the parties as  
26 “Confidential.”

27                             (c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and  
28 for any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on

1 the exterior of the container or containers in which the information is stored the  
2 legend “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information  
3 warrants protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, shall identify the  
4 protected portion(s).

5       5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent  
6 failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive  
7 the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material.  
8 Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable  
9 efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this  
10 Order.

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12       6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

13       6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a  
14 designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s  
15 Scheduling Order.

16       6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party Shall initiate the dispute  
17 resolution process under Civil Local Rule 37-1 et seq.

18       6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding shall be  
19 on the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper  
20 purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other  
21 parties), may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating  
22 Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties shall  
23 continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it  
24 is entitled under the Producing Party’s designation until the Court rules on the  
25 challenge.

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27       7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

28       7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that

1 is disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with  
2 this Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action.  
3 Such Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and  
4 under the conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been  
5 terminated, a Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of Section 13 below  
6 (FINAL DISPOSITION).

7 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at  
8 a location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the  
9 persons authorized under this Order.

10       7.2 Disclosure of “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items. Unless  
11 otherwise ordered by the Court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a  
12 Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated  
13 “CONFIDENTIAL” only to:

14           (a) the Receiving Party’s Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as  
15 well as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably  
16 necessary to disclose the information for this Action;

17           (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of  
18 the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;

19           (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom  
20 disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have read this Order and  
21 signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

22           (d) the Court and its personnel;

23           (e) court reporters and their staff;

24           (f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional  
25 Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have  
26 signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

27           (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a  
28 custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;

(h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the depositing party requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the Court. Pages of transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED  
IN OTHER LITIGATION

If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party must:

(a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification shall include a copy of the subpoena or court order;

(b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification shall include a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with the subpoena or court order shall not produce any information designated in this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which the

1 subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party's  
2 permission. The Designating Party shall bear the burden and expense of seeking  
3 protection in that court of its confidential material, and nothing in these provisions  
4 should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action  
5 to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

6

7 **9. A NON-PARTY'S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE**  
8 **PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION**

9 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a  
10 Non-Party in this Action and designated as "CONFIDENTIAL." Such information  
11 produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the  
12 remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be  
13 construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

14 (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to  
15 produce a Non-Party's confidential information in its possession, and the Party is  
16 subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party's  
17 confidential information, then the Party shall:

18 (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party  
19 that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality agreement  
20 with a Non-Party;

21 (2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated  
22 Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably  
23 specific description of the information requested; and

24 (3) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-  
25 Party, if requested.

26 (c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this Court within  
27 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party  
28 may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery

1 request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party shall  
2 not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the  
3 confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the Court.  
4 Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party shall bear the burden and  
5 expense of seeking protection in this Court of its Protected Material.

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7 **10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

8 If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed  
9 Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this  
10 Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in  
11 writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its best efforts  
12 to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person  
13 or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this  
14 Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the “Acknowledgment and  
15 Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

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17 **11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE**  
18 **PROTECTED MATERIAL**

19 When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain  
20 inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection,  
21 the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil  
Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify whatever  
22 procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for production  
23 without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d) and  
24 (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure of a  
25 communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or work  
26 product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the stipulated  
27 protective order submitted to the Court.

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2     12. MISCELLANEOUS

3       12.1 Right to Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any person  
4 to seek its modification by the Court in the future.

5       12.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this  
6 Protective Order, no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to  
7 disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in this  
8 Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on any  
9 ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective Order.

10      12.3 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any  
11 Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5. Protected Material  
12 may only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the  
13 specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material  
14 under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information  
15 in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

16  
17     13. FINAL DISPOSITION

18       Final disposition shall be deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims  
19 and defenses in this Action, with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein  
20 after the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or  
21 reviews of this Action, including the time limits for filing any motions or  
22 applications for extension of time pursuant to applicable law. After the final  
23 disposition of this Action, within 60 days of a written request by the Designating  
24 Party, each Receiving Party must return all Protected Material to the Producing  
25 Party or destroy such material. As used in this subdivision, "all Protected Material"  
26 includes all copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries, and any other format  
27 reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Whether the Protected  
28 Material is returned or destroyed, the Receiving Party must submit a written

1 certification to the Producing Party (and, if not the same person or entity, to the  
2 Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that (1) identifies (by category, where  
3 appropriate) all the Protected Material that was returned or destroyed; and (2)  
4 affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any copies, abstracts, compilations,  
5 summaries, or any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected  
6 Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel are entitled to retain an archival  
7 copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial, deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal  
8 memoranda, correspondence, deposition and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney  
9 work product, and consultant and expert work product, even if such materials  
10 contain Protected Material. Any such archival copies that contain or constitute  
11 Protected Material remain subject to this Protective Order as set forth in Section 4  
12 (DURATION).

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21 14. Any violation of this Order may be punished by any and all appropriate  
22 measures including, without limitation, contempt proceedings and/or  
23 monetary sanctions.

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25 IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

26  
27 DATED June 12, 2025

1 /s/ Matthew Loker

2 Attorneys for Plaintiffs, Atul Paul and Ashna Paul

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4 DATED: June 12, 2025

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6 /s/ Jared M. Lockhart

7 Attorneys for Defendant, Experian Information Solutions, Inc.

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9 DATED: June 13, 2025

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11 /s/ David J. Kaminski

12 Attorneys for Defendant, Columbia Debt Recovery LLC

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14 DATED: June 12, 2025

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16 /s/ Theodore E. Roethke

17 Attorneys for Defendant, Equifax Information Services, LLC

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19 DATED: June 12, 2025

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21 /s/ Sean Moloney

22 /s/ Donald Bradley

23 Attorneys for Defendant, Trans Union LLC

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1 FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, IT IS SO ORDERED.  
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3 DATED: June 16, 2025

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6 Honorable Steve Kim  
7 United States Magistrate Judge  
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## EXHIBIT A

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [print or type full name], of \_\_\_\_\_ [print or type full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United States District Court for the Central District of California on [date] in the case of \_\_\_\_\_ **[insert formal name of the case and the number and initials assigned to it by the court]**. I agree to comply with and to be bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, and I understand and acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and punishment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in any manner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective Order to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after termination of this action. I hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_ [print or type full name] of \_\_\_\_\_ [print or type full address and telephone number] as my California agent for service of process in connection with this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective Order.

Date:

City and State where sworn and signed:

Printed name:

Signature: